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# Special Report of the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

## I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2281 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 31 July 2016 and requested me to conduct a strategic review of the Mission to ensure, in consultation with the Government of the Central African Republic, that the future mandate of MINUSCA was properly configured and adapted to a post-transition stabilization environment that would enable peacebuilding efforts. In its resolution, the Council requested me to present my recommendations by 22 June. The present report comprises the findings of the strategic review and recommendations concerning the future mandate of MINUSCA.

## II. Background

2. The most recent episode of the long-running crisis in the Central African Republic erupted in December 2012 when a rebel coalition, the Séléka, advanced towards Bangui, taking over the capital and ousting the then President, François Bozizé, in March 2013. The ensuing violence pitted the Séléka against self-defence groups that formed the anti-balaka, prompting large-scale intercommunal violence with religious undertones and a massive protection crisis, including the displacement of a fifth of the population internally and to neighbouring countries. The country faced a total breakdown of law and order, and already fragile State institutions completely collapsed. In April 2014, the Security Council adopted resolution 2149 (2014), in which it requested me to subsume the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic into MINUSCA. The establishment of MINUSCA followed missions deployed by organizations of the subregion and the African Union and, combined with the actions of other international forces, in particular French Sangaris force, contributed to a relative improvement in the security situation.

3. In July 2014, the President of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, initiated a political process in Brazzaville in his capacity as mediator of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Nationwide local consultations



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early in 2015 were followed by the holding of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in May 2015. Credible and largely peaceful presidential and legislative elections were held in late 2015 and early in 2016. On 30 March, Faustin Archange Touadera was sworn in as President, bringing the two-year political transition to an end.

## III. Strategic review of the Mission

4. Following the completion of a conflict-analysis exercise, a strategic review mission to the Central African Republic was conducted from 7 to 17 May 2016. The team met a broad range of stakeholders, including the President, the Prime Minister, Simplice Sarandji, and Cabinet members, the Bureau of the National Assembly, key members of the parliament and former presidential candidates, civil society and women's groups, representatives of the diplomatic and donor community, including the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, MINUSCA senior leadership and civilian and uniformed personnel, and the United Nations and humanitarian country teams. In addition to Bangui, the team also visited Bouar and Kaga Bandoro.

### A. Main findings of the strategic review

#### 1. Political and subregional situation

5. The political situation continues to be dominated by the aftermath of the events of 2013. Most interlocutors agreed that, with the election of the President, the country had turned a page. Expectations are high that the newly elected officials will deliver on their promises immediately. In addition, the country continues to benefit from, and will continue to need, the goodwill of the international community. Interlocutors confirmed, however, that the challenges remained daunting and that State capacity was extremely low. In his meeting with the review team, the President confirmed that addressing the security situation was his first priority, underlining the need for a comprehensive approach towards the armed groups that involved political dialogue, security sector reform and reconciliation, together with a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process and efforts to combat impunity. He also stressed the importance of concluding the electoral cycle by organizing municipal and regional elections, which interlocutors noted could be an important step towards addressing gaps in representative and accountable governance.

6. Following his inauguration, the President initiated a first round of dialogue with the armed groups, including factions of the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka. On 17 May, he wrote a letter to me to confirm his Government's determination to confront the root causes of the conflict, including through dialogue with the armed groups. In a communiqué issued on 18 May, he reported on his initial discussions with the armed groups, stating that several of them had confirmed their willingness to engage in a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, although others had preconditions. On the same day, he appointed a former presidential candidate, Jean Willybiro-Sako, as a special minister counsellor and coordinator for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, security sector reform and national reconciliation.

## 2. Subregional and regional dynamics

7. Interlocutors confirmed that subregional dynamics and bilateral relations between the Central African Republic and neighbouring countries remained vital for the country's future trajectory. The dynamics in the subregion are closely interlinked and affect the situation in the Central African Republic, including in relation to the country's porous borders, the transhumance, weapons proliferation and cross-border armed group and criminal activity. The long-term stability of the country will depend in part on the subregional and regional integration of the Central African Republic and the continued engagement of neighbours in support of the country in a constructive manner.

## 3. Security situation

8. The continued presence of armed groups and other armed spoilers, as well as intercommunal violence and the lack of capacity of the national security forces, pose the most pressing and dangerous challenge to the stability of the country. The armed groups and other spoilers continue to threaten civilians, divert and illicitly exploit natural resources, undermine security and the rule of law and deny the Government access to and authority over large parts of the country.

9. The ex-Séléka coalition has splintered and reorganized since being officially dissolved in September 2013. The Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique is under the control of Nourredine Adam, who serves as the first vice-president of the group, which continues to be led, at least in name, by the former President, Michel Djotodia. The group renounced the signature of its representative to the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation negotiated during the Bangui Forum and signed on 10 May 2015. The group's area of influence stretches from Haute-Kotto and Vakaga prefectures and westward to Nana-Grébizi prefecture.

10. Other ex-Séléka factions with the capacity for destabilization include the Bambari-based Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, led by Ali Darassa, which claims, among other things, to protect the Fulani population, notably in Basse-Kotto and Ouaka prefectures. The smaller Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique, formed in July 2015 by Idriss Ahamat and Mahamat al-Khatim, is active primarily in Kémo-Gribingui and Ouham prefectures, but has challenged the hegemony of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique elsewhere. Another ex-Séléka group, the Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique, led by Joseph Zoundeiko, is active in Bambari. Other groups loosely linked to the ex-Séléka include the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain, led by Abdoulaye Miskine, and the Retour, réclamation, réhabilitation group, which claims to defend the Fulani community. Each of these groups controls significant economic activities in its area of operation, including illicit gold and diamond mining.

11. Interlocutors reported an increase in violent activities in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures attributed frequently to the Lord's Resistance Army, with more than 290 abductions reported between January and April, including of 60 children. A number of self-defence groups have emerged in those areas in response to reported attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, with sometimes similar tactics. On 20 May, Uganda announced its intention to withdraw its troops from the African Union Regional Task Force in the Central African Republic.

12. The anti-balaka movement and affiliated groups remain present throughout the western and central parts of the country. Many have localized criminal agendas relating to access to mining activities, river or road axes and/or cattle herds, although some maintain links to Bangui-based anti-balaka leaders. Clashes between anti-balaka groups and ex-Séléka factions continue mostly in the Bambari and Kaga Bandoro areas.

13. Against this backdrop, the strategic review team noted the continuing efforts to deploy additional capabilities to strengthen MINUSCA, including the planned deployment of a quick-reaction force. The review was also informed of the planned withdrawal of French Sangaris forces from the Central African Republic by the end of 2016.

## 4. Protection of civilians, human rights and humanitarian situation

### *Protection of civilians*

14. Although the situation has improved since 2013, civilians continue to be at serious risk, mainly in the centre of the country, in particular in Bambari and Ndélé, and in the Bossangoa-Batangafo-Kaga-Bandoro triangle. Protection concerns are also high in the north-west, in particular in the areas of Bocaranga and Paoua owing to the presence of anti-balaka and other local armed groups. While freedom of movement has improved, the continued presence of minority enclaves (see para. 14) in the west and Bangui indicates continued threats to civilians, which has an impact on potential population returns. In the east, where the main ex-Séléka factions and other armed groups compete over the control of territory, there are protection concerns relating to wildlife trafficking and the illicit trade of natural resources, while in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures there is an increasing number of abductions and other protection concerns linked to the reported presence of the Lord's Resistance Army and self-defence groups.

### *Human rights, including conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations against children*

15. There was a notable decrease in large-scale violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses by armed groups during the presidential and legislative electoral period. Human rights abuses and violations by armed groups continue, however, especially in Bambari, Kaga Bandoro and Ndélé, as well as in the north-west and parts of the east. Ex-Séléka factions and anti-balaka groups continue to perpetrate killings, injuries, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, extortion, pillaging and the destruction or appropriation of property. Increasing human rights violations by government security forces, in particular by elements of the armed forces, gendarmerie, police and the Central African Office for the Suppression of Banditry, have been documented, including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Complete impunity for human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence and grave violations against children, continues to be reported. A draft law establishing a national institution for human rights is pending consideration by the Government. Conflict-related sexual violence is a major concern, which remains largely underreported. Armed groups have yet to make a formal commitment to addressing this situation. The active recruitment and use of children by armed groups has subsided in large part, although commitments made at the Bangui Forum to separate children from the armed groups have not

been implemented. Children also continue to be victim of abuses and grave violations by armed groups. Serious abuses against persons accused of witchcraft, mostly older persons, women and children, have increased since 2013.

*Humanitarian situation*

16. Half the population continues to face acute humanitarian needs. Some one fifth of the population remain displaced, with more than 418,000 people displaced internally, including more than 185,000 living in some 100 sites where they are exposed to security threats, including infiltration by armed groups. More than 36,000 people from minority groups are still at risk in enclaves in Berbérati, Boda, Bouar, Carnot, Dekoa, PK5/Bangui and Yaloke, with no sustainable solution for their protection. Some 482,500 Central African refugees remain in neighbouring countries.

17. Attacks and hostilities between armed groups, in particular in the Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé prefectures, continue to cause new displacements. Humanitarian access to people in need remains constrained by logistical and security challenges. In the east, humanitarian access has been restricted following a surge of attacks. Notwithstanding some returns by internally displaced persons, the conditions for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns have yet to be met. The Central African Republic hosts 7,664 refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. In addition, some 10,500 South Sudanese refugees arrived recently in Bambouti. Although humanitarian assistance remains the lifeline of half the population, the 2016 humanitarian response plan, requiring $531.5 million, was less than 12 per cent funded as at 14 June 2016.

## 5. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform

*Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation*

18. The President indicated that disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation was one of his first priorities and that he had initiated dialogue with armed groups in that regard. Some armed groups have made the settling of their grievances, including participation in government processes and institutions, integration into the internal security services and defence forces and the socioeconomic development of the north-east, preconditions for enrolling in the process. Pending the beginning of a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, MINUSCA is implementing predisarmament, demobilization and reintegration projects on the basis of article 4 of the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and integration into uniformed forces, signed at the Bangui Forum. More than 2,800 combatants, including 413 women, have enrolled in such labour-intensive projects in six priority locations. Projects to reduce community violence targeting members of armed groups who do not meet the eligibility criteria for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation have been launched in Bangui and Paoua.

*Security sector reform: state of the Central African Armed Forces*

19. The President has publicly expressed his intention to transform the Central African Armed Forces from a "projection force" to a "garrison force" that is professional and inclusive, with clear command and control structures. The military continues to be dominated by three primarily Christian ethnic groups and the defence sector is excessively staffed, with 8,300 persons on its payroll, accounting for a quarter of public expenditure. During the transition, 7,300 soldiers were registered in a biometric database and more than 3,000 army personnel underwent a simplified verification process. The Ministry of Defence and the defence headquarters were partially restructured with support of the European Union Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic.

20. Notwithstanding the development of a draft national security policy by the transitional authorities, the roles and responsibilities of the armed forces and internal security institutions have yet to be delineated. The situation was further compounded by the recent deployment of the armed forces for law enforcement duties in Bangui. Overall, policy frameworks are non-existent or anachronistic, while democratic civilian oversight of security agencies is weak. The absence of a dedicated civilian oversight authority to regulate weapons and ammunition management and activities has also contributed to the illicit flow of weapons.

## 6. Extension of State authority and the rule of law

21. Since 2013, 14 prefects, 71 sub-prefects and 176 mayors nominated by the transitional authorities have been redeployed and received basic training, with the support of partners. A total of 400 civil servants, mostly from the education sector, were also redeployed before the elections and, since September 2014, MINUSCA has funded the rehabilitation of 80 administrative buildings through quick-impact projects. Interlocutors noted that most of the redeployed civil servants required specialized training, while accountability mechanisms were largely absent. Many civil servants assigned to the provinces ultimately return to Bangui, while continuing to collect salaries. The State continues to play a marginal role in the delivery of social services, especially in the health sector.

*Police*

22. The President and other interlocutors, including partners, acknowledged the importance of reinforcing the police and gendarmerie, which are understaffed and underfunded. Of the 3,700 registered police and gendarmerie officers, only 800 are deployed outside Bangui. The police-citizen ratio of 1:1,250 is extremely low. There is a high rate of ageing officers with no institutionalized pension system and salary arrears are common. There has been no recruitment since 2010 and no retirements since 2005. A draft five-year development and capacity-building plan has been developed with the support of MINUSCA.

*Justice*

23. The country's 28 ordinary courts and 162 magistrates effectively ceased to function following the events of 2013. Magistrates have since been redeployed to 23 courts in Bangui and throughout the country with the support of MINUSCA. Courts in Bangui have resumed operations, including holding the first criminal

sessions since 2010. Magistrates appointed in parts of the country under the influence of armed groups remain in Bangui.

24. The investigation and prosecution of serious crimes by the national authorities remains difficult. It is estimated that 70 per cent of criminal cases are heard by magistrates without adequate professional training, owing in part to the National School of Administration and Judicial Studies lacking training curricula and skilled trainers. The Supreme Court of Justice and the Inspectorate-General of Judicial Services lack the necessary resources, while relevant legislation does not guarantee the independence of the judiciary. Threats to magistrates and their families have been reported, and there is no system to protect victims and witnesses. The operationalization of the Special Criminal Court remains urgent in view of the inability of the national justice system to try serious crimes. MINUSCA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are supporting the selection and deployment of and support for international and national magistrates to the Court.

*Corrections*

25. The penitentiary service was underdeveloped before 2013 and is barely functional. Although directors have been appointed for all 38 prisons, only 7 facilities house inmates and only 11 have staff present. Prison escapes are common, infrastructure is largely dilapidated and the food budget is woefully inadequate. Notwithstanding existing legislation providing for the civilian management of the prisons, there are fewer than 60 civilian prison staff, only 8 of whom are trained in prison security. The armed forces currently fill the gap, including in Bangui.

## 7. Socioeconomic recovery

26. In 2012, the Central African Republic was ranked 180 of 187 on the human development index. In 2013, the gross domestic product declined by 37 per cent following the crisis and, for the following two years, the Government's budget was funded almost entirely by donors. National revenue began to increase in 2015, however, and reached approximately $100 million, having plummeted to $24 million in 2013. The increase was bolstered by a modest recovery in key sectors early in 2015 and supported by the implementation of public financial management reforms, including through the central accounting agency of the Treasury. Notwithstanding that development, expenditure exceeded foreseen revenue in 2015, while only 30 per cent of government expenditure followed regular procedures. A gap of $17 million is projected for the second quarter of 2016.

27. National authorities recognized a need to lay the groundwork for bridging humanitarian, recovery and development efforts through the formulation of a prioritized socioeconomic recovery plan. To support preparations for a conference of donors and investors to be held in Brussels in November 2016, a joint United Nations, World Bank and European Union scoping mission conducted from 10 to 17 May agreed with the Government on the objectives and scope of and the approach for a joint peacebuilding and recovery assessment, which will be led by the Government with the assistance of partners and have the objective of prioritizing needs across the development, policy and security pillars. The strategy will be presented in Brussels and will serve as a framework to guide the support and financing by the Government and its partners over a five-year period.

### 8. Support considerations

28. Managing a United Nations peacekeeping operation in a landlocked country of more than 620,000 $km^2$ continues to represent a significant challenge, and the Mission is still working to reach its full operational capacity. The major supply route from Doula to Bangui is the lifeline of the country, MINUSCA and humanitarian and development partners and needs to be constantly secured. It is also prone to congestion. As a result, the transportation of cargo on this route can take from 20 to 40 days. In addition, the Government continues to impose taxes on all imported goods for MINUSCA. The infrastructure network is highly dysfunctional, especially in the east. The rainy season renders roads impassable for six months of the year, making the east, north and south-east reachable only by air during this time. Strong winds and high levels of dust, as well as the scarcity of properly refurbished airstrips, make the majority of airports not fully functional after sunset.

29. The 2013 crisis had an impact on local commerce and banking systems, and opportunities for outsourcing are minimal. Service providers, when available from outside the country, come at a prohibitive cost. The providers of information and communications technology are unreliable. Recent commercial transport arrangements, however, are more feasible and customs brokers are now available to facilitate the movement of goods into the country. Challenges with respect to human capital within the country have also hampered the recruitment of national staff.

## B. Recommendations of the strategic review

### 1. End state, priority tasks and strategic objective for the Mission

30. Drawing on lessons learned from earlier peacekeeping deployments in the Central African Republic, the review assessed that the end state for the United Nations peacekeeping presence would be the attainment of the minimum conditions required to avoid a relapse into conflict following the withdrawal of United Nations troops and police. The end state would be achieved through interrelated and overarching objectives linked to the political process and institution-building, security and the protection of civilians, human rights and justice and socioeconomic recovery and development.

31. In pursuing such an end state, MINUSCA will need to continue to make the protection of civilians a key task, within its capabilities and areas of deployment. Other key tasks will include facilitating the creation of a secure environment for the unhindered and civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return and local integration or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees, in close coordination with humanitarian and development actors. The implementation of the mandate will continue to be underpinned by United Nations system-wide adherence to my Rights Up Front initiative.

32. While reaffirming these ongoing priority tasks, the review sought to define a strategic objective that would most effectively advance MINUSCA towards its proposed end state. It is recommended that the strategic objective of MINUSCA over the coming two to three years be to support the sustainable reduction of the presence of armed groups through a comprehensive approach. By focusing on this strategic objective and prioritizing activities geared to progress towards it,

MINUSCA will contribute to a more secure environment for civilians, the development of an accountable and responsive State capable of delivering basic services, a climate more favourable to the protection of human rights that is increasingly conducive to combating impunity, and reconciliation and social and economic development.

## 2. Recommended priority activities

33. It is recommended that this strategic objective be pursued by MINUSCA through a comprehensive and flexible three-pronged approach.

*Supporting the political process, as well as accountable, inclusive and transparent governance and the sustained extension of responsible State authority*

34. MINUSCA would make full use of its good offices and technical expertise to support a continuation of the process initiated by the President with the armed groups, with the aim of broadening the political process to address the root causes of the conflict. Doing so would involve supporting the Government in its engagement with neighbouring countries, the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union, in consultation with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

35. MINUSCA would support the Government in broadening political space, including by supporting efforts to address marginalization and local grievances. It would also enable an eventual decentralization process by providing technical, logistical and security support for the holding of local elections, notably with technical assistance, such as for the development of essential legislation. Further to a request from the national electoral authority for such support, the United Nations will undertake an electoral assessment mission to determine the modalities, nature, scope and scale of any such support in line with the principles of self-reliance and sustainability. MINUSCA would also support increasing inclusive governance by promoting the participation of the population in local development decisions, including through engagement with civil society groups and political parties. Particular attention would be given to supporting the engagement of women and young people in political decision-making processes.

36. MINUSCA would promote accountable and transparent governance by supporting, in coordination with partners, the National Assembly in its oversight and legislative functions. The Mission would also promote the reform of key rule of law and security institutions, including by continuing to use its good offices to advocate critical reforms, as well as the creation of strong national human rights institutions. It is recommended that, in coordination with partners, the Mission deploy experts to key ministries to assist in the development of national plans for the professionalization and deployment of, among others, police, judicial, penitentiary and territorial administration officers.

37. MINUSCA would continue to support the extension of State authority to increase its effectiveness and responsiveness to local needs, including promoting the principles of gender sensitivity and equality. Given the breadth and scope of such needs, however, MINUSCA would prioritize the provision of technical advice to select government ministries at the national level, including the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior, Public Security and Territorial Administration, as well as to local administrations through its current field presences. It is

recommended that MINUSCA mentor local authorities in priority areas, in close coordination with partners, to foster confidence among local communities in the equitable delivery of State services. It is also recommended that MINUSCA continue to support the deployment of territorial administration and rule of law authorities in priority locations, including by identifying needs and training on the provision of minimal administrative and judicial services in these priority areas.

38. It is recommended that MINUSCA assume a leading role in supporting the Government in the reform and development of the police and gendarmerie, with the support of donors and the United Nations country team, including through the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-conflict and other Crisis Situations. MINUSCA would continue to support the review of the draft police and gendarmerie capacity-building and development plan, as well efforts to build the capacity of existing police and gendarmes to assume their law-and-order responsibilities, including static guard and protection duties in Bangui currently performed by MINUSCA. The Mission would also continue to coordinate international assistance to the police and gendarmerie. In addition, once the police and gendarmerie academy is refurbished through the joint programme of MINUSCA, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and contingent on the ability of the Government to fund severances and pensions for police and gendarmes eligible for retirement in 2016, MINUSCA would support the selection, recruitment, targeted vetting and training of at least 500 new police and gendarmerie recruits in the coming 12 to 18 months, taking into account the need to promote the recruitment of women, and in full compliance with the human rights due diligence policy. This training would be complemented by reinforced co-location by MINUSCA with national police offices and gendarmes in agreed priority areas, including as part of the deployment of the territorial administration and other rule of law authorities. Efforts are also under way to engage donors and other partners to provide additional support in key areas on police and gendarme reform.

39. MINUSCA would support the consolidation of the governance and accountability structures of the justice sector, in particular the Supreme Court of Justice and the Ministry of Justice, as well as the training of judicial personnel at the national level by the National School of Administration and Judicial Studies. It would also continue to support and mentor national judicial actors progressively deployed in priority areas to enable the delivery of basic justice services, including by ensuring that services are available to women and children, and augment local capacity to process criminal cases, in particular by supporting criminal trials, as well as basic administrative services such as birth certificates. Where the deployment of judicial authorities is not possible, it is recommended that the Mission mentor and support magistrates assigned to those prefectures but currently operating out of Bangui on, among other things, the issuance of warrants and the processing of criminal cases against those arrested under the urgent temporary measures mandate.

40. Pending any progress made on the demilitarization of prison security, MINUSCA would continue to provide the robust mentoring and monitoring of trainee national prison officers and armed forces elements charged with security at the Ngaragba central prison and the Camp de Roux annex at Ngaragba, as well as monitor prison conditions. In cooperation with the United Nations country team and other partners, MINUSCA would support the gender-responsive selection and

training of new prison officers, with a particular focus on the 250 officers who will gradually, over three years, replace armed forces elements currently securing Ngaragba and Camp de Roux, and the rehabilitation of eight prison facilities in priority locations, taking into account the need to separate male and female and adult and juvenile detainees. MINUSCA would also mentor and monitor national prison authorities outside Bangui.

*Enhancing the security environment, including by supporting the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, community violence reduction projects and security sector reform*

41. It is recommended that MINUSCA support the creation of a secure environment conducive to the sustainable reduction of the threat posed by armed groups, including through political dialogue, a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, security sector reform and reconciliation. MINUSCA would maintain a robust and flexible posture, with the aim of preventing major armed confrontations and challenges to the State and by securing key areas and main supply routes to ensure freedom of movement and the extension of State authority. Working with partners, it is recommended that MINUSCA also support the Government in addressing illegal taxation and the illicit exploitation of natural resources relating to the presence of the armed groups through targeted approaches. MINUSCA will need to continue to enhance coordination with the African Union Regional Task Force, in particular in the light of the reported increase in attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army. MINUSCA will keep its presence in the east of the country under review in view of the potential departure of Uganda from the Task Force given protection concerns that may materialize.

42. MINUSCA would enable the voluntary disarmament of ex-combatants through a comprehensive gender-sensitive and gender-responsive strategy that supports the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and community violence reduction projects in affected communities. It would also support the limited integration of members of armed groups into the national security agencies, as well as temporary security arrangements involving members of armed groups. Pending the launch of the national programme, MINUSCA would continue predisarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations and support the Government's planning and fundraising efforts, in particular for the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life and their integration into security and defence forces and other public institutions. Once the conditions for the launch of the national programme are met, MINUSCA would support its implementation, including the launch of operations, the transition of predisarmament, demobilization and reintegration project sites into sites for the national programme and the establishment of a mechanism to identify and repatriate foreign combatants. MINUSCA would also ensure that weapons and ammunition collected through this process are assessed, stored (or destroyed when applicable) and managed appropriately. It is recommended that MINUSCA also continue to support the Government in implementing projects to reduce community violence, as well as community weapons collection and reconciliation efforts, within existing resources. Meanwhile, MINUSCA, in close coordination with the United Nations country team, would continue to implement the young people at risk initiative launched in 2014, while reinforcing efforts to separate children from armed groups.

43. With regard to the reform of the security sector, MINUSCA would provide strategic, political and technical advice to the Government to develop a vision and subsequently design and implement a strategy for the security sector architecture, including to enhance national capacity to address the proliferation of weapons and ensure effective weapons and ammunition management, in coordination with other partners engaged in security sector reform. This would involve ensuring a clear delineation of responsibilities among the national defence and security forces and other uniformed entities. MINUSCA would also support the Government in the coordination of international assistance on security sector reform, including with regard to the elaboration of development plans for the armed forces, police, gendarmerie, defence, water and forest service and border management service.

44. In a letter of 30 May addressed to me by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, I was informed that a European Union training mission, the successor to the European Union Military Advisory Mission, would be established in July. It will train two to three battalions of the armed forces during its initial two-year mandate and play a critical role in defence sector reform, including by providing strategic advice to the Ministry of Defence and to General Staff. To ensure a clear division of labour on the basis of comparative advantages, MINUSCA would ensure coherence between training mission support activities in defence sector reform and the overall security sector reform process by supporting the Government in providing strategic direction to and the coordination of international partners, including the training mission. In addition, it is recommended that the gradual return of armed forces units trained by the training mission to operational missions be done in close cooperation with MINUSCA and in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy. At the same time, it is important to note that, notwithstanding the planned efforts on defence sector reform, a number of gaps will need to be addressed, including the importance of equipping and ensuring the sustenance of trained armed forces units. In the meantime, partners will need to address the issue of the deployment of armed forces elements currently present in Bangui.

45. It is also recommended that MINUSCA support the Government in developing and implementing a progressive, realistic and tailored approach to the targeted vetting of the defence and security forces, including in the context of any integration of armed group elements into security sector institutions. Until then, it is recommended that MINUSCA continue to support the Government in implementing the simple verification process that is being undertaken for the armed forces, which includes targeted human rights vetting, and that this be extended to the police and gendarmerie.

*Assisting the Government in combating impunity and promoting and protecting human rights, as well as promoting reconciliation*

46. MINUSCA would continue to contribute to efforts to combat impunity by supporting judicial and non-judicial mechanisms in compliance with relevant international norms and standards. It would also promote accountability mechanisms and a culture of responsibility through greater transparency and the promotion and protection of human rights.

47. MINUSCA would support, together with UNDP and with assistance from bilateral donors, the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, including with regard to its staffing, management and security. The Mission would also assist the national authorities, including the special prosecutor of the Court, in conducting investigations and implementing a well-prioritized prosecutorial strategy aimed at bringing important cases to trial within 18 months of the prosecutor's deployment. The investigations would, among other things, inform the Government's issuance of arrest warrants, which would also inform the implementation of the urgent temporary measures mandate to execute arrests by MINUSCA. The Mission and its partners in the joint rule of law programme would also support the development and implementation of victim and witness-protection mechanisms.

48. It is recommended that MINUSCA support a mapping of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law since 2003, which would inform the development of the prosecution strategy referenced above, national criminal proceedings and potential future mechanisms to establish the truth, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition. MINUSCA would also continue to monitor, investigate and report on the human rights situation in order to inform dialogue and advocacy with national authorities and armed groups with the aim of decreasing violations, including conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations against children, and supporting efforts to combat impunity.

49. Working with partners, MINUSCA would support reconciliation initiatives, including through consultations with local authorities, refugees and internally displaced persons, religious and traditional leaders, women's groups, groups representing young people, representatives of minority ethnic groups and communities on their grievances; mediation and conflict-resolution mechanisms at the national and local levels; and government-led national consultations with communities to promote greater accountability and social cohesion, including with regard to the reintegration of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. As an essential component of reconciliation, MINUSCA would advocate and support a coherent and comprehensive approach to the design of appropriate transitional justice processes and mechanisms to address the legacy of past human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence, and those committed against women and children.

### 3. Partnerships and the role of the wider international community

50. The work of MINUSCA will be based on the principles of complementarity and comparative advantages with the United Nations country team and international actors and in partnership with national authorities. An integrated strategic framework will be developed to deepen collaboration and clarify roles and responsibilities among the United Nations system.

51. The Central African subregion and region, including ECCAS and the African Union, have a crucial role to play in support of the country, in particular in addressing common challenges, including security issues of mutual concern, the management of the transhumance and the provision of targeted financial or in-kind support. MINUSCA, in coordination with UNOCA, will support the efforts of the national authorities to sustain the engagement of the subregion and the region.

52. MINUSCA would prioritize supporting the Government to sustain international attention on the country during the next phase, including for the

generation of sufficient resources for humanitarian requirements and, in particular, at the conference of donors and investors that will be held in Brussels in November 2016. In this regard, MINUSCA would seek to encourage international partners, including the European Union and the World Bank, as well as bilateral and other donors, to address issues beyond its own capacities and to work with them and the national authorities to ensure that the international architecture is responsive to the post-electoral realities.

53. Critical to the successful delivery of international support is the building of a strong partnership with the Government, which would be further strengthened through the proposed framework of mutual accountability. An interministerial committee has been established by the Government to develop, with international partners, such a framework that is based on existing national, regional and international commitments and frameworks, including the outcomes of the Bangui Forum. It will be essential to ensure an effective articulation of this framework with the ongoing peacebuilding and recovery assessment that will inform the planned conference of donors.

54. The implementation of the strategy of MINUSCA will rely on the use of strategic communications as an essential tool to underpin its work. MINUSCA would, among other things, communicate clearly and regularly to key target audiences on its mandate, in particular outside Bangui, with an emphasis on managing expectations and publicizing its work in support of the disarmament of the armed groups, political engagement and dialogue, with a focus on reconciliation.

## 4. Military, police and support implications

55. Given the continued fragility of the security situation, and taking into account the announced departure of the French Sangaris force, it is recommended that the currently authorized military and police strength of MINUSCA be maintained. The strength of authorized uniformed personnel would be kept under close review depending on changes in the situation on the ground. A rebalancing of the strength of both components, including a possible reduction of the military component, may be considered while progress in the implementation of the Mission's strategy is realized.

56. The capabilities of the military component of MINUSCA are being enhanced through the deployment of additional multipliers within the authorized troop strength, including a special forces company, a multifunctional quick-reaction force and increased situational awareness through an unmanned aerial system. Efforts will continue to enhance the capabilities of existing MINUSCA contingents. In addition, the military deployment will be adjusted and consolidated, including by concentrating the force in larger permanent operating bases to, among other things, allow for longer-range patrols. The new capabilities, coupled with the change in deployment patterns, will enable the force to better project military effect in protecting civilians, creating an enabling environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and addressing the threat of armed groups, while rationalizing the Mission's resources. The change in posture will require greater force mobility. A review of the air mobility requirements will be conducted, taking into account military and logistical requirements. Infrastructure development efforts by MINUSCA will also be enhanced by replacing two of the three signals units with a fourth military engineering unit.

57. MINUSCA will redeploy three of the formed police units currently in Bangui to Bambari, Bria and Kaga Bandoro to enhance the protection of civilians. This will be achieved by working with the Government to gradually transfer static guard duties in Bangui to national security institutions. A further review of the deployment of the formed police units and individual police officers may be required, should additional tasks arise with regard to prison security, the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, the implementation of the development plan of the police and gendarmerie and the securing of sites for internally displaced persons and areas of eventual voluntary returns.

58. In the light of the significant structural challenges inherent in conducting operations in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA will explore additional innovative approaches to support the implementation of its mandate. New technology will be exploited to its fullest. MINUSCA will create a common operating picture by integrating various sensors, including cameras, unmanned aircraft systems and aerostat, static and mobile sensors, into a single framework. The Mission will also explore the use of reusable kits and light transportable and compactable equipment to enable rapid deployments. Partnerships will be sought to increase synergies, including with agencies, funds and programmes, to promote the use of joint services and the sharing of resources, including through co-location. The well-being and working conditions of personnel also requires urgent and close attention and the causes of high morbidity and mortality among Mission staff will be addressed through a stronger medical response.

59. A civilian staffing review will soon be conducted to ensure that the Mission's functional and geographical structure and staffing are adapted to its new mandate. The Mission will also establish an environmental baseline to minimize its environmental impact and decrease its consumption of natural resources and production of waste. It will continuously re-evaluate and enhance its security management practices, measures and resources in order to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and operations.

## IV. Observations

60. Early in 2013, the Central African Republic faced staggering levels of violence, massive population displacement and the complete collapse of State institutions. At that time, I urged the international community to act swiftly to sustainably stem the violence. I recommended that the Security Council should authorize the establishment of MINUSCA, while underlining that its deployment should be part of a broader, longer-term engagement of the international community to help the Government and the people to address the root causes of conflict and rebuild the State. I also stressed that there could be no quick fix to the crisis and that the deployment of MINUSCA had to be accompanied by the political commitment of national stakeholders to, among other things, ensure an inclusive political process and transparent governance.

61. The successful completion of the transition and peaceful transfer of power just two years since the establishment of MINUSCA are significant milestones. However, the gains are fragile and could still be reversed. There is now a unique window of opportunity to consolidate the gains of the transition and create the conditions for sustainable peace and socioeconomic recovery. The elected

authorities will have to lead these efforts and demonstrate their ability to govern inclusively and transparently, but continued and sustained support from the international community will be essential. In this regard, I welcome the President's outreach to the armed groups and his vision for a process to bring the reasons for their existence to an end. I encourage him and the Government to pursue this process in the spirit of national reconciliation and inclusiveness, guided by the principles and recommendations emanating from the Bangui Forum, in order to reach durable peace and stability. I urge the armed groups to engage in this process in good faith. The success of a comprehensive effort to reduce the threat posed by armed groups will require progress in key priority areas identified by the President, including disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; security sector reform, including the reform of the armed forces; combating impunity; supporting justice, reconciliation and the restoration of State authority; and socioeconomic development.

62. A credible and fully functioning security apparatus based on a national vision for the country's security architecture will be fundamental to ensuring a sustainable return to stability. The redeployment of professional and accountable defence and security forces is an important priority. It will be vital to ensure that the redeployment of the security forces, including of the armed forces units to be trained by the European Union training mission, is accompanied within the framework of comprehensive security sector reform efforts that result in clearly delineated functions of the various forces and the transformation of the national defence and internal security forces into professional, multi-ethnic, accountable and regionally balanced forces under the civilian control and oversight of democratically elected institutions. I urge the Government to adopt a national security policy building on the draft endorsed by the transitional authorities. I reiterate my encouragement to the Government to facilitate agreement on the structure and functions of the future defence and security forces, including through the engagement with the armed groups, with regard to the integration of elements that have undergone targeted vetting.

63. I also encourage the authorities to prioritize the development of professional and accountable national police and gendarmerie services that should progressively assume law and order tasks in Bangui and throughout the country. The national police and gendarmerie need to assume their rightful responsibilities for law and order, and the armed forces must disengage from such responsibilities. In the interim, I take note of the President's request that MINUSCA continue to perform its mandate relating to arrest and detention under the urgent temporary measures outlined in paragraph 32 (f) (i) of resolution 2217 (2015). I also urge the Government to undertake the measures necessary for the timely deployment of the international special prosecutor for the Special Criminal Court and call upon the national authorities to implement the reforms necessary to establish an accountable and effective justice and corrections system and an independent judiciary, with a view to progressively delivering basic rule of law services in priority areas.

64. Notwithstanding the progress made during the transition, the country continues to face monumental challenges. The development of a framework of mutual accountability will be an important pillar of the partnership between the Central African Republic and international and regional partners, and I welcome the progress made in this regard under Central African leadership. I also welcome the President's commitment to working closely with the international community in the

formulation of a prioritized and costed national recovery and peacebuilding plan in advance of the conference of donors to be held in Brussels in November. It is essential that the framework of mutual accountability and the national recovery and peacebuilding plan be part of an integrated and coherent package underpinned by a suitable and unified follow-up architecture adapted to the realities of the Central African Republic.

65. The scope of humanitarian needs and displacement inside and outside the country remain alarming. In the past year, while the levels of funding for humanitarian assistance have halved, food insecurity has doubled. One in two Central Africans now faces hunger, while 2.3 million people are still in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and protection. In addition, 1 million Central Africans remain forcibly displaced and their safe and sustainable reintegration must remain a key priority, as well as a barometer of the peacebuilding process. I urge donors to contribute in order to meet urgent humanitarian requirements, including those outlined in the 2016 humanitarian response plan.

66. Further to the findings of the strategic review outlined here, I recommend that the mandate of MINUSCA be renewed for 18 months, until 31 January 2018, at its currently authorized troop ceiling of 10,750 military personnel, including 480 military observers and staff officers, 2,080 police personnel, including 400 individual police officers and 1,680 formed police unit personnel, and 108 corrections officers.

67. In addition to continuing to prioritize the protection of civilians and supporting the creation of conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, I recommend that the mandate of MINUSCA reflect that the strategic objective of the Mission be to reduce the threat posed by armed groups through the prioritized and sequenced implementation of the three-pronged strategy outlined in paragraphs 32 to 47 above, with the activities described therein. By implementing the approach described herein, I believe that MINUSCA will enter the next phase properly configured and adapted to the post-transition environment as requested by the Security Council. The implementation of the mandate will be predicated on Central African leadership and ownership, sustained international support and the imperative of avoiding a dependency that might be difficult to break.

68. The new posture and the induction of additional capabilities within the currently authorized ceiling will significantly enhance the situational awareness of MINUSCA and ensure a more flexible conduct of operations. Against this backdrop, the need to enhance the capability of some contingents cannot be overemphasized. I urge troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries to take the steps necessary to ensure that the MINUSCA contingents reach their full operating capability. I am concerned about the reported increase in attacks in the south-east of the country attributed to the Lord's Resistance Army and other armed groups. I recommend that MINUSCA continue its efforts to protect civilians through enhanced coordination with the African Union Regional Task Force. In the light of the intention of Uganda to withdraw two battalions from the African Union Regional Task Force, MINUSCA will keep its protection efforts and deployment in the south-east under review.

69. Working together with all relevant partners, including the United Nations country team, will be critical if the proposed approach outlined herein is to be a success. It will require a coherent approach to maximize the impact of our support. I

therefore recommend a strengthened role for MINUSCA in support of the Government's efforts to coordinate international assistance during the coming mandate period. The United Nations is committed to continuing to work together with partners in the subregion and the region that have played a vital role during the transition, including the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as well as the African Development Bank. The Peacebuilding Commission will also have an important role to play in coordinating and mobilizing partner support for peacebuilding efforts.

70. The implementation of the Mission's mandate will continue to be challenged by the structural constraints inherent in operating in a landlocked country, where operations are particularly difficult owing to, among other things, the limited number of reliable service providers. I am committed to delivering effective, efficient and rapid support while striving for a resource-conscious and environmentally conscious approach. As indicated herein, doing so will be realized by identifying new potential partners and enhancing synergies with existing service providers, while promoting joint interventions, resource sharing and, where possible, co-location. The United Nations will also work to improve the living and working conditions outside Bangui, while accelerating the recruitment of personnel with the skills required to successfully support the Mission in the next phase. This will be done through the implementation of a set of measures to minimize the environmental footprint of the Mission while maximizing the efficient use of natural resources, in keeping with my commitment to establishing the United Nations as a model for sustainable practices.

71. I am outraged by continued reports of sexual exploitation and abuse, in particular by MINUSCA personnel and other international forces. I expect the highest standard of conduct from all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel. I reiterate that all United Nations personnel must comply with my zero-tolerance policy regarding misconduct. While progress has been made under the leadership of my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, on prevention, reporting, coordination and a victim-driven approach to addressing human rights abuses, including sexual exploitation and abuse, MINUSCA will continue to focus on enhancing and improving these mechanisms in close coordination with the United Nations country team. I remain fully committed to ensuring that perpetrators of these appalling abuses are brought to justice. I reiterate my call upon troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries to take vigorous and enhanced preventive predeployment measures and to ensure swift and appropriate disciplinary action and investigations to ensure accountability and justice for victims. In parallel, the United Nations will continue to implement a series of measures in line with resolution 2272 (2016) and the recommendations of the External Independent Review Panel on sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic.

72. I am grateful to my Special Representative for his tireless efforts in carrying out the Mission's mandate. I am deeply appreciative of the work carried out by the civilian and uniformed men and women of MINUSCA and the United Nations country team in a demanding environment. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, for his engagement in the subregion in coordination with MINUSCA. I thank troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the Economic Community of

Central African States, the European Union, the World Bank, international partners and multilateral and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to support the people and authorities of the Central African Republic in their pursuit of peace and stability. Moving forward, strengthening the strategic partnership between the Government and MINUSCA, in particular, will be key to ensuring the effective implementation of the international community's support for lasting peace and recovery efforts in the Central African Republic.